

WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD NORTH COAST REGION

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE BOARD

January 2001

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Appointment of new Board Member Dina Moore; Resignation of Board Member Marcia McGlochlin

The Governor announced the appointment of new Board Member Dina Moore. Ms. Moore and her husband own the Lone Star Ranch, a commercial cow-calf operation and timber ranch. In 1998, she received a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency to study the land management activities of the ranching community in the Van Duzen watershed. Ms. Moore served as the co-chair on the Environmental and Water Quality Committee to the Humboldt Del Norte Cattlemen's Association. She also founded the watershed group YES (Yager/Van Duzen Environmental Stewards), and serves as President. Ms. Moore fills one of the Water Quality Seats on the Regional Board. Ms. Moore's term will expire September 30, 2004.

Ms. Marcia McGlochlin who was recently appointed to the Board resigned effective January 5, 2001.

CLEANUPS AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION

Remco Site at 475 E. San Francisco Ave., Willits Peters Site at 266 Shell Lane, Willits

[Staff contact: Luis Rivera]

The East San Francisco Avenue site is the location of a former machine shop operated by Remco in the 1970s. Improper waste disposal is alleged to have occurred at the site.

A portion of the Peters site (below) was leased by Remco Hydraulics, and Remco stored raw materials and drums containing coolants, solvents, oils, and water at the site. Improper disposal and discharge of wastes is alleged to have occurred at the Peters site.



(Peters Site, 266 Shell Lane, Willits)

California Water Code Section 13267 Orders were issued for each of the above-referenced sites on November 14, 2000, requiring that hydrogeological assessment workplans be submitted by December 20, 2000. The workplans for both of the sites were received on December 20, 2000.

Remco Site, 934 South Main Street, Willits

Waste Discharge Requirements for the in-situ pilot study were adopted by the Regional Water Board on July 27, 2000. The Waste Discharge Requirements permitted the two in-situ pilot studies using calcium polysulfide and molasses to reduce hexavalent chromium to trivalent chromium. The injection of the calcium polysulfide and molasses began on September 25, 2000, and was completed on September 29, 2000. The Regional Water Board has received two monitoring reports since the pilot study injection process was completed.

The groundwater monitoring data show decreases in hexavalent chromium in groundwater in both pilot study areas. It is too early to evaluate the effects of the pilot study on the other chemicals of concern at the site such as volatile organic compounds (or solvents).

The first stormwater sampling event of the year at the facility occurred on October 6, 2000. The results do not indicate that the storm drain system has been impacted by the pilot study.

Air monitoring of the pilot study occurred for six weeks. Results indicate that hydrogen sulfide was generally detected at levels below the 30 part per billion level contained in the Waste Discharge Requirements as a safeguard against the creation of a nuisance. The 30 ppb hydrogen sulfide level was exceeded three times. One detection appears to be an anomaly. The two other detections were along Highway 101 where the instrument recorded interferences from other sulfur sources.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Garcia River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

[Staff contact: Dave Evans]

On January 3, 2001, the Garcia River TMDL was signed and delivered by the State Water Resources Control Board to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). OAL has 30 days to review the administrative record and make a final decision. After OAL approval, the TMDL becomes an effective regulation and may be used for state purposes. However, the TMDL also must be approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency before becoming effective for federal purposes. Technical staff are now being hired to implement the Garcia River TMDL.

Klamath River Modeling and Information Session

[Staff contact: David Leland]

On December 12, 2000, the Regional Water Board staff met with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Bureau of Reclamation and toured the facilities that use the Klamath River water diverted from South Oregon and California dams. The coordination meeting is part of an ongoing effort to coordinate TMDL activities for the Klamath River and Clean Water Act Section 401 Certifications for relicensing the dams under the Federal Emergency Regulatory Commission.

Monitoring and Assessment

[Staff contact: Robert Klamt]

On January 10, 2001, the Regional Water Board staff plans to meet with local biologists familiar with Russian River watershed fisheries issues. The objective of the meeting is to review available spatial data, prioritize additional data needs and discuss appropriate analyses that can be accomplished with the system. The meeting is limited to a very specific technical group at this point - those who have a biological background and an understanding of geographical information system (GIS). The group is an internal working group set up by National Marine Fisheries Services, and as such, is limited to those agencies contributing to the effort and with knowledge of the program.

The discussion will be expanded to the larger Russian River Watershed GIS Group at a regularly scheduled meeting after the smaller group has an opportunity to develop recommendations.

WATERSHED PROTECTION DIVISION

Update on Geysers Recharge Project

[Staff contact: Paul Keiran]

The Geysers Recharge project contractors have finished the Llano Road section of this 41-mile project, and are presently constructing the Mark West section.



(Geysers Recharge Project – Soil Disposal Site on Private Land)

The City of Santa Rosa is focusing a high degree of awareness regarding water quality concerns, committing over 1 million dollars to inspection oversight and protection of aquatic habitat.

Sediment management is crucial to this effort as the project will produce hundreds of thousands of yards of soil spoils in need of permanent disposal sites. The city is working with private landowners who are interested in accepting soil. Potential soil disposal sites are mapped and carefully inspected, with specific conditions as to where soils can and cannot be placed. The project contractor is responsible for working with the landowner on erosion control issues once the soil has been deposited onsite. To date, the project has successfully and safely placed over 60,000 cubic yards on both city and private lands.

Lower Russian River Water Quality Protection Efforts Related to Stream Dredging Projects

[Staff contact: Andrew Jensen]

Staff is preparing to update or rescind an outdated 1981 permit that allows the Sonoma County Water Agency to conduct many projects without the need for Regional Water Board review.

Staff inspected six streams where dredging and other maintenance was performed during the fall of 2000. Staff is identifying potential water quality impacts from these activities in order to work with the agency on methods to increase protection of water quality.

Staff intends to bring this item before the Board at an upcoming meeting.

TIMBER HARVEST DIVISION

Pacific Lumber Company (PALCO)

[Staff contact: Frank Reichmuth]

In the December Monthly Report to the Board, it was reported that on October 13, 2000, the Regional Water Board staff filed nonconcurrences on three PALCO Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) in the Freshwater Creek drainage. The California Department of Forestry is still considering whether to approve or deny the THPs.

Information on the Regional Water Board's proceedings regarding Pacific Lumber Company's and Scotia Pacific Company, LLC's Timber Harvest and Related Activities in the North Fork Elk River, Stitz Creek, Bear Creek, Jordan Creek, and Freshwater Creek Watersheds is available on our web site at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/palco.html>

CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDERS

There were three Cleanup and Abatement Orders issued during the month of December.

CALIFORNIA WATER CODE SECTION 13267 LETTER ORDERS

There were eight California Water Code Section 13267 letter orders issued during the month of December.

A California Water Code Section 13267 letter was issued to the Klein Family Vintners on December 6, 2000. The Regional Water Board staff, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner are investigating the cause for approximately 350 bird deaths at the subject vineyard property. The property is adjacent to Gill Creek, which is a fish-bearing tributary to the Russian River.

The 13267 letter requires that a qualified consultant experienced in pesticide issues prepare a report detailing such items as chemical usage, methods used to protect surface and groundwater, a plan for determining soil and groundwater contamination around the irrigation well, and other matters.

The initial reports indicate levels of an organophosphate nematicide (fenamiphos, the active ingredient in Nemacur) in some of the surface water samples. The pesticide Nemacur apparently was applied to the approximate 30-acre vineyard through a drip irrigation system.

A second 13267 letter was issued on December 26, 2000, to the Klein Family Vitners requiring that a monitoring report be submitted. Staff are concerned about the possibility of pesticide contaminated runoff leaving the site during future storm events. The contaminated runoff could be deleterious to human health or fish and wildlife.

ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINTS/ ORDERS

Reza Baghery, Groundwater Contamination at the Southland Corporation, Santa Rosa.

On December 8, 2000, the Executive Officer determined that the remaining \$150,000 of the Administrative Civil Liability Complaint issued to Mr. Reza Baghery on October 28, 1999, for failure to operate a groundwater cleanup system was due and payable. On this same date, a revised Cleanup and Abatement Order was issued for this leaking underground tank site to Mr. Baghery and other responsible parties for the cleanup. A California Water Code Section 13267 letter was also issued to Mr. Baghery and Mr. Amir Gholami on December 28, 2000, requiring that Mr. Baghery submit a technical workplan by January 30, 2001.

There were no other Administrative Civil Liability Complaints issued during the month of December. However, the Administrative Civil Liability Order pertaining to the City of Santa Rosa Laguna Subregional Wastewater Treatment Reuse and Disposal Facility was adopted as proposed on December 6, 2000.

CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 401 CERTIFICATIONS

There were five Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certifications and two 401 Denials Without Prejudice issued during the month of December.

There were seven new Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification applications received and posted during the month of December.

Information regarding proposed certifications is available at our Internet web site at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/notice404.html>

SPILLS, COMPLAINTS AND INSPECTIONS

On December 5, 2000, the Regional Water Board staff was notified of a sanitary sewer overflow that occurred on December 4, 2000. It was reported that approximately 300 gallons of untreated effluent from the Garberville Community Services District discharged out of a manhole and spilled into a storm drain at the Sherwood Forest drainage, which is a tributary to the South Fork of the Eel River. The sewer mainline was snaked and the backup was cleared. There was no cleanup that occurred and the spill did not drain into the South Fork of the Eel River. It appears as though the cause of the obstruction in the mainline was grease.

On December 8, 2000, the Regional Water Board staff received information of a train accident in Weed, Siskiyou County. It was reported that approximately 100 gallons of diesel fuel were spilled but no waterways were affected. A representative with Union Pacific Railroad stated that some of the diesel was removed and approximately 70 to 80 yards of impacted dirt were excavated and hauled away for disposal.

On December 12, 2000, the Regional Water Board staff was notified about a hydrocarbon spill on the Kendall-Jackson property located at 1190 Kittyhawk Boulevard. It was reported that a Unisource delivery truck was leaking diesel fuel from an uncapped fuel tank. Several intersections within one-half mile of the Kendall-Jackson property were inspected. It was estimated that the volume of the diesel spill was approximately two gallons. A representative from Unisource contacted the Regional Water Board and began cleanup efforts at each intersection. Unisource agreed to provide a report to the Regional Water Board regarding the cleanup process.

On December 29, 2000, the Regional Water Board staff contacted the Sonoma County Department of Transportation regarding an overturned crane on Skaggs Spring Road. On December 19, 2000, it was reported that a 25-ton crane had fallen over the embankment on Skaggs Spring Road, approximately one mile west of Tin Barn Road. The crane fell in an area that provides drainage to the South Fork of the Gualala River. Because the crane had fallen down an embankment and was considered unstable, it was unknown if the diesel tanks had leaked. On January 2, 2001, it was determined that there was no leak from the two saddle tanks but the auxillary tank for the crane had leaked. The volume of spilled diesel was estimated to be between 20 and 40 gallons.

Excavating the contaminated soil began on January 4, 2001. A copy of the excavation report, including volume of soil removed, laboratory results, and disposal documentation will be provided to the Regional Water Board staff upon completion of the cleanup.

There were no other spills reported on the Sanitary Sewer Overflow and Spills database for the month of December.

UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK CLEANUP FUND PROGRAM

During the month of December, there were four Letters of Commitment issued in Region 1. From September 2000 to December 2000, there has been a total of \$907,634 in funds issued to tank owners in Region 1 from the Underground Storage Tank Cleanup Fund.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Costa-Machado Water Bond Act (Proposition 13) Workshops

The Regional Water Board staff sponsored a series of Proposition 13 Grant Workshops throughout the region to educate the public and interested organizations on the process of Request for Proposals. The workshops scheduled were: December 13, 2000, Santa Rosa; December 18, 2000, Eureka, and December 20, 2000, Yreka.

Stream Restoration Workshop

The Regional Water Board staff participated in a stream restoration workshop in Round Valley, located in the Middle Fork Eel River watershed. The workshop was sponsored by the Round Valley County Water District and was attended by restoration practitioners from both private and public entities. The presentation detailed the restoration activities for streams in and around Round Valley.

2000 Career Fair

On December 8, 2000, the Regional Water Board staff attended the 2000 Career Fair at Humboldt State University in Arcata. Staff provided information about careers with the Regional Water Board to over 200 students enrolled as scientists, geologists, and engineers.

PUBLIC FILE REVIEW

From December 1 through January 1, there were two written requests for review of the Regional Board's records. These files were made available pursuant to the California Public Records Act. In addition, there were a total of 23 people who came into the offices and requested file review.

PROMOTIONS/STAFF HIRING

New hires during the month of December include Jonathan Warmerdam and Jill Sunahara, both Environmental Specialists I.